

# PRESS RELEASE

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## For Immediate Release

April 22, 2008

## Contact Person

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Assistant U.S. Attorney

Madison, Wisconsin -- Erik C. Peterson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Walter J. Palmer, 48, of Eden Prairie, Minn., pleaded guilty today in U.S. District Court in Madison to making a false statement to a federal agent in connection with the hunting of a black bear in Wisconsin.

The government proffered the following evidence at the plea hearing:

The hunting of black bears in the State of Wisconsin is regulated by state law and allowed only in specific geographical areas. When a licensed hunter kills a bear, Wisconsin law requires the hunter to immediately tag the bear and transport it to a registration station located within the zone or subzone in which the bear was killed.

On September 1, 2006, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issued a license to Walter J. Palmer, authorizing him to hunt and kill a black bear only in Subzone A1 in northern Wisconsin. On September 30, 2006, Palmer, with the assistance of others, hunted and killed a black bear near Phillips in Price County, Wisconsin, at a location approximately 40 miles by vehicle outside of Subzone A1.

After the bear was killed, members of the hunting group noticed that Palmer's tag was for Subzone A1 and that the bear had been killed outside of that zone. The

members of the group, including Palmer, agreed that if any authorities were to ask where the bear had been killed, they would say it had been killed off Taylor Lake Road south of Minong, a location in Subzone A1.

Palmer and others transported the bear carcass to a registration station in Subzone A1. At the registration station, Palmer filed a Bear Registration Stub, falsely certifying that the bear had been killed in Subzone A1. Palmer later caused the bear carcass to be transported from Wisconsin to Minnesota.

On October 15, 2006, and again on October 25, 2006, a special agent of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service interviewed Palmer. In those interviews Palmer falsely stated that he believed he had shot the bear off Taylor Road, and that he thought the bear had been killed legally.

U.S. District Judge Barbara B. Crabb scheduled sentencing for July 15, 2008, at 1:00 p.m. Palmer faces a maximum penalty of five years in prison.

The charge against Palmer is the result of an investigation conducted by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The prosecution of the case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephen P. Sinnott.

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